DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 289 887 TM 870 614

AUTHOR	Coburn, Louisa
TITLE	Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation, Princeton, N.J.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Aug 84
CONTRACT	400-83-0015
NOTE	3p.; An ERIC Digest published in the ERIC/TME Update Series.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Faculty; Evaluation Problems; *Evaluation Utilization; Higher Education; Reliability; *Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; Validity
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

Research on student evaluation of college teachers' performance is briefly summarized. Lawrence M. Aleamoni offers four arguments in favor of student ratings: (1) students are the main source of information about the educational environment; (2) students are the most logical evaluators of student satisfaction and effectiveness of course elements; (3) the student-teacher communication involved raises the level of instruction; and (4) use of student ratings by other students in course selection may increase the possibilities that excellence in instruction will be rewarded. Although faculty have expressed concern about the ratings being measures of popularity, research indicates that students can effectively discriminate between teaching effectiveness and other affective dimensions. Research does not support strong relationships between teacher ratings and student grades, while research on the effect of class size is inconclusive. It is noted that design of the rating forms should consider the purpose of the evaluation (formative or summative); that the ratings should be administered by appropriate departments; and that a summary of results should be available quickly. In general, individual respondents' comments should not be published. (GDC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ERIC UPDATE

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE

ED289887

Although many techniques have been used to identify teacher behaviors that are associated with instructional effectiveness, one of the most controversial is student evaluation of teacher performance, or student ratings. Few faculty question the usefulness of ratings in providing feedback about instructional effectivess in order to guide instructional improvement, but many continue to challenge the use of student ratings in personnel decisions (Marsh et al., 1979, p.149). This digest offers a rationale for the use of student ratings, describes the research literature pertaining to some of the concerns faculty have about the validity and reliability of such ratings, and identifies the major issues involved in designing and administering rating forms and reporting their results.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT RATINGS

Aleamoni (1981) offers the following arguments as support for the use of student ratings of teacher performance:

1. Students are the main source of information about the learning environment, including the development of motivation for continued learning, rapport with students, and degree of communication between instructors and students.

2. Students are the most logical evaluators of the quality and effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, such course elements as content, method of instruction, textbooks, homework, and student interest.

3. Student ratings provide for communication between students and instructor, which may lead to the kind of involvement by student and instructor in the teaching-learning process that raises the whole level of instruction

4. Student ratings of particular instructors and courses can be used by other students in selecting courses and instructors, and may increase the chances that excellence in instruction will be recognized and rewarded.

FACULTY CONCERNS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Faculty have several concerns about the use of student ratings in both formative and summative evaluations. Research that addresses each concern is summarized below.

Student Ratings as Measures of Popularity. Most research has found that "students can successfully differentiate between teaching effectiveness and other affective dimensions such as attitude, interest, and friendliness of the teacher" (Peterson and Kauchak, 1982, p. 26).

Reliability. Research evidence supports the view that carefully constructed evaluation instruments with well-developed procedures for their administration can yield high internal consistency reliabilities. Most of the research evidence supporting the validity of rating forms, in which student ratings were compared to colleague ratings, student learning measures, expert judges' ratings, etc., indicates the existence of high to moderate positive correlations.

Grades. Though some research has found relationships between student grades and ratings of teachers, most of these relationships were relatively weak or nonexistent.

Class Size. Research is divided on this issue. The belief that instructors of larger classes receive lower ratings is supported by the results of some studies and refuted by others.

TM 870 614

ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation
Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541, 609-921-9000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Required Versus Elected Courses. Most of the reported research seems to support the belief that students who are required to take a course rate it lower than students who elect to take it.

DESIGNING THE RATING FORMS

Rating forms can be adopted from other institutions, or constructed by students, faculty, administrators, or committees. Experts in questionnaire design should be involved in the development of student rating forms in order to avoid producing a finished questionnaire that reflects a bias toward any one aspect of instructional effectiveness.

It is most important to decide for what purpose the form will be used. Formative evaluation requires information that can be used by the instructor to modify and improve the instructional process. Summative evaluation requires information that can be used by a third party for decisions about promotion, tenure, merit pay, etc. Each kind of evaluation requires that decisions be made about the content, level of inference, and type of response required of the items it contains.

ADMINISTERING THE RATING FORMS

The method of administering and gathering student responses can determine the quality of the resulting data. If possible, the responsibility should be given to instructional development or testing personnel. Regardless of who does the actual administration, a standard set of instructions and a designated time to fill out the questionnaire are essential. Informal administration can lead to bias in the ratings, low return of the forms, or less than candid responses on the part of students.

REPORTING THE RESULTS

If the results of student ratings are not reported in a timely manner, then their usefulness can be compromised. Decisions must be made about whether to return the actual form or summaries of the data to the instructor. If the actual forms are returned, then the instructors need to be given a method of tabulating and summarizing their own results so that they can avoid concentrating on negative or positive feedback alone.

One of the most important decisions to be made is who will see or use the results. Faculty have the right to know how the results will be reported and should be given the option of releasing copies of the results if the evaluation is not mandatory. To avoid subjective interpretations by third parties, it is recommended that students' actual written comments not be reported to the student body or the administration.

Results of the ratings can be reported in student newspapers or student published books. Reporting the results in this way is most effective if it is done in a positive manner with only the most highly rated instructors or courses listed.

Finally, Aleamoni (1981) is careful to point out that how student ratings are used is of utmost importance. All who use the ratings must be careful to avoid placing inappropriate emphasis on selected student responses. Ideally, student ratings are but one component of a comprehensive instructional evaluation system.

REFERENCES

• Aleamoni, Lawrence M. "Student Ratings of Instruction." In Handbook of Teacher Evaluation, edited by Jason Millman. Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1981.

• Benton, Sidney E. Rating College Teaching: Criterion Validity Studies of Student Evaluation-of-Instruction Instruments. AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 1. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 1982. ED 221 147.

• Marsh, Herbert W.; and others. "Validity of Student Evaluations of Instructional Effectiveness: A Comparison of Faculty Self-Evaluations and Evaluations by their Students." Journal of Educational Psychology 71 (April 1979): 149-160.

• Peterson, Ken; and D. Kauchak. Teacher Evaluation: Perspectives, Practices, and Promises. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah University, Center for Educational Practice, 1982. ED 233 996.

NOTE: Much of the content of this digest is based on Aleamoni (1981).

LC 8/84

The National Institute of Education

This publication was prepared with funding from the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education under contract no. NIE-400-83-0015. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of NIE or the Department of Education.